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**OFFICE OF PETITIONS**

In re Patent Number 7,178,235 :  
Issued February 20, 2007 :  
David R. ROLSTON et al : DECISION ON PETITION  
Application No. 10/725,566 : UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)  
Filed: December 3, 2003 :  
Attorney Docket No. 16005-3US-1 AD/ad :

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), filed August 21, 2007, to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. §120 for the benefit of priority to the prior-filed nonprovisional application set forth in the concurrently filed amendment.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition for acceptance of a claim for late priority under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after the expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii). In addition, the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 120 and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) of the prior-filed application, unless previously submitted;
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

The petition does not comply with item (1).

First, 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) requires that any nonprovisional application claiming the benefit of one or more prior-filed copending nonprovisional applications must contain or be amended to contain a reference to each such prior-filed application, identifying it by application number (consisting of the series code and serial number) and indicating the relationship of the

Second, the reference to add the above-noted, prior-filed applications on page one following the first sentence of the specification is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed applications. An incorporation by reference statement added after an application's filing date is not effective because no new matter can be added to an application after its filing date (*see* 35 U.S.C. § 132(a)). If an incorporation by reference statement is included in an amendment to the specification to add a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 after the filing date of the application, the amendment would not be proper. When a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 is submitted after the filing of an application, the reference to the prior application cannot include an incorporation by reference statement of the prior application. *See Dart Industries v. Banner*, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980). *Note* MPEP §§ 201.06(c) and 608.04(b).

The statement “This application is also related to commonly assigned co-pending applications filed herewith bearing application number 10/625,905 titled: “Optical Connector Assembly” and 10/625,901 titled: “Optical Ferrule”, the specifications of which are hereby incorporated by reference” will require review by the examiner for the issue of new matter in any renewed petition.

Before the petition under 37 CFR § 1.78(a)(3) can be granted, a renewed petition under 37 CFR § 1.78(a)(3) an Application Data Sheet or a substitute amendment (complying with 37 CFR 1.121 and 37 CFR 1.76(b)(5)), which states the relationship of the prior-filed application to this application, are required.


Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

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Any questions concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-0602.



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